

contrary to welfare. The result is a confusion of all the functions of the society, and a falseness in all its mores. Any of the aberrations which have been mentioned will produce evil mores, that is, mores which are not adapted to welfare, so that a group may fall into vicious habits.

104. Illustrations. This was well illustrated at Byzantium.

The development of courtesans and prostitutes into a great and flourishing institution; the political rule, by palace intrigues, of favorites, women, and eunuchs; the decisive interference of royal guards; the vices of public amusements and baths; the miseries and calamities of talented men and the consequent elimination of that class from the society; the sycophancy of clients; the servitude of peasants and artisans, with economic exhaustion as a consequence; demonism, fanaticism, and superstition in religion, combined with extravagant controversies over pedantic trifles, — such are some of the phenomena of mores disordered by divorce from sober interests, and complicated by arbitrary dogmas of politics and religion, not forgetting the brutal and ignorant measures of selfish rulers. In the Merovingian kingdom barbaric and corrupt Roman mores were intermingled in a period of turmoil. In the Renaissance in Italy all the taboos were broken down, or had lost their sanctions, and vice and crime ran riot through social disorder. As to the degeneracy of mores, we meet with a current opinion that in time the mores tend to "run down," by the side of another current opinion that there is, in time, a tendency of the mores to become more refined and purer. If the life conditions do not change, there is no reason at all why the mores should change. Some barbarian

peoples have  
brought their mores into true adjustment to their  
life conditions,  
and have gone on for centuries without change.  
What is true,  
however, is that there are periods of social  
advance and periods  
of social decline, that is, advance or decline in  
economic power,  
material prosperity, and group strength for war.  
In either case  
all the mores fall into a character, temper, and spirit  
which con-  
form to the situation. The early centuries of the  
Christian  
era were a period of decline. Tertullian<sup>1</sup> has a  
passage in

<sup>1</sup> *De Anima* ^ 30.